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United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Program Aid No. 1695

Vesicular Stomatitis... or Foot-and-Mouth Disease?



Clinical signs are identical. In some cases almost the entire epithelial surface of the tongue is detached.



Ruptured blisters on the nose and mouth of a cow, with excessive salivation.



Ruptured blister on the gum.



Blister at the end of a cow's teat.

Vesicular Stomatitis... or Foot-and-Mouth Disease?

Vesicular stomatitis is a viral disease that affects cattle, horses, swine, sheep, goats, many wild animals, and—occasionally—humans. It causes vesicles (blisters) to form in the mouth (on the tongue, dental pad, and lips), in the nostrils, on areas around the hooves, and on the teats.

These blisters swell and break, leaving raw tissue that is so painful, infected animals generally refuse to eat or drink and show signs of lameness. Severe weight loss often follows, and in dairy cattle, a severe drop in milk production commonly occurs.

The outward signs of vesicular stomatitis are identical to those of **foot-and-mouth disease (FMD)**, a foreign animal disease that has not occurred in the United States since 1929. The only way to tell the two diseases apart is through laboratory tests.

Vesicular stomatitis occurs sporadically in the United States only in the summer and early fall months. The disease is transitory and generally runs its course in about 2 weeks.

How the disease spreads from herd to herd is not fully known. Once in a herd, the disease apparently moves from animal to animal by contact or exposure to saliva or fluid from ruptured lesions. Isolation can reduce spread, and antibiotics help prevent secondary infections.

Anyone noting any signs of a vesicular condition—excessive salivation, lameness, loss of weight, drop in milk production, and blisters—should **immediately report** these signs to their veterinarian or State or Federal animal health officials. Early detection is vital in preventing the nationwide spread of FMD, eliminating possible invasions of FMD, and most importantly, protecting our valued livestock industries.

For more information or help, go to the Internet address below or call:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

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Issued May 1983
Slightly Revised March 2001

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